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NEWS

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DNR PARKS AND LAND RECLAMATION JOIN TO RECLAIM LAND

JEFFERSON CITY, MO , SEPT 12, 1989 - G Tracy Mehan III, director of the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, has found an innovative way to reclaim some abandoned mine land. The land was mined for industrial minerals, which include limestone, sand and gravel, clay, and barite. Mehan's plan involves a cooperative effort between the department's Land Reclamation Program and Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation Division.

The parks division is dedicating staff and equipment to grade fill, and seed three abandoned industrial mines. Reclamation of industrial mines is important to prevent erosion, eliminate stream sedimentation and remove public safety hazards.

The parks division is using limited staff time and equipment to reclaim the abandoned mines with the available money.

"The agreement benefits many parties," said G Tracy Mehan III, director of the Department of Natural Resources. "The cooperation between the department's programs adds no cost to the taxpayers, returns the property to a usable state for the landowner, and solves environmental problems. This offers an innovative means of reclaiming these sites and an example of efficient government."

State law requires industrial miners to put up a \$500 bond, before mining begins, for each acre they intend to mine. That small amount, however, means operators too often find it cheaper to walk away from a

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site when they finish mining rather than reclaim it, in that case the Department of Natural Resources keeps the bond money

However, the small amount of the bond proceeds makes it impossible for the Department of Natural Resources to hire a contractor to do the work. Contractors often show little interest in bidding on the projects with so little reimbursement available.

The parks division will be paid the following amounts from forfeited land reclamation bond monies for the work at these three sites:

-Pacific Sand and Gravel, St. Louis County--under way	\$3,300
-Blinne site, Butler County, near Poplar Bluff--completed	\$1,400
-Cape Ready Mix, Scott County, near Benton--completed	\$ 200

There will be no Parks and Soils Sales Tax money spent on this reclamation work.

Mehan said the assistance from the parks division provides an important interim solution to some smaller industrial minerals land reclamation problems. The long-term solution, however, will require stronger reclamation laws, including sufficient bonds to allow the state to reclaim abandoned sites when necessary.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Mehan, members of the department's land reclamation staff, and land reclamation commissioners will explain how they propose to strengthen the laws during a news conference Sept. 27 at the Pacific Sand and Gravel pit in St. Louis County.

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